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Vladimir Vuković

*PhD, Lecturer in Urban Design, Carinthia University of Applied Sciences, 9800 Spittal/Drau,
Austria, v.vukovic@cuas.at*

ПРИЧА О ДВА КАМПУСА -
ГРАДСКА И ПРИГРАДСКА
РЈЕШЕЊА КАМПУСА
ЕВРОПСКОГ УНИВЕРЗИТЕТА -
ДИСКУСИЈА НА ТЕМУ ДВА
ПРИМЈЕРА У БЕЧУ

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PhD, Lecturer in Urban Design, Carinthia University of Applied Sciences, 9800 Spittal/Drau, Austria, v.vukovic@cuas.at

A TALE OF TWO CAMPUSES - URBAN AND SUBURBAN SOLUTIONS OF THE EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY CAMPUSES - A DISCUSSION ON TWO EXAMPLES IN VIENNA¹

ABSTRACT

The newly opened campus of the Vienna University of Economics and Business (WU Wien) has quickly developed into a public attraction. It is the most frequently asked aim of all architectural tours in Vienna since 2013. The nine hectares area houses the largest University of Economics in the European Union. With the participation of star architects, this greenfield project was developed on the basis of the Anglo-Saxon spatial model of a campus. Despite the effective staging architecture, this area has not become an exciting and lively part of the city. At weekends and during the term holidays the campus looks like a ghost town, due to the fact that there are not enough attractions for people outside lecture time. A contrasting example of this suburban concept is the campus of the University of Vienna (Altes AKH), which was implemented in the late 1990s in a historic complex of buildings in the city. Although it was built with a lower budget, this campus still works very well – both as an educational institution and as part of the urban neighbourhood. This example shows us that in the long tradition of urban development in central Europe the universities and their environment have always been closely associated within the city. This concept ensures a better function in this region up to nowadays.

Key words: *Campus, Altes AKH, WU Wien, star architects*

ПРИЧА О ДВА КАМПУСА - ГРАДСКА И ПРИГРАДСКА РЈЕШЕЊА КАМПУСА ЕВРОПСКОГ УНИВЕРЗИТЕТА - ДИСКУСИЈА НА ТЕМУ ДВА ПРИМЈЕРА У БЕЧУ

РЕЗИМЕ

Новоотворени кампус Економског универзитета у Бечу (WU Wien) је брзо постао јавна атракција. То је најтраженија дестинација свих архитектонских обилазака у Бечу од 2013. године. На површини од девет хектара се налази највећи економски универзитет у Европској унији. Уз учешће истакнутих архитеката, овај гринфилд пројекат је настао на основу англосаксонског просторног модела кампуса. Упркос ефикасно постављеним архитектонским рјешењима, ово подручје није постало узбудљив и жив дио града. Викендом и током празника кампус изгледа као град духова, због чињенице да нема довољно атракција за људе када немају предавања. Супротан примјер овог приградског концепта је кампус Универзитета у Бечу (Altes AKH), који је реализован касних 1990-их у историјском комплексу зграда у граду. Иако је изграђен са нижим буџетом, овај кампус и даље ради јако добро - и као образовна институција, и као дио урбаног дијела града. Овај примјер показује да су у дугој традицији урбаног развоја у централној Европи универзитети и њихово окружење увијек били уско повезани унутар града. Овај концепт омогућава бољу функцију у овом региону све до данас.

¹ This article is based on the author's lecture at the University of Maribor, October 14th, 2014..

1. THE CAMPUS OF THE VIENNA UNIVERSITY OF ECONOMICS AND BUSINESS

The opening of the new Campus of the Vienna University of Economics and Business (WU Wien) in October 2013 was one of the most popular happenings in Austria and abroad at that time. It was not surprising, because it was one of the largest university building sites in Europe, and the list of architects was nearly like the “who’s who” of the world’s architectural scene: Zaha Hadid, Patrik Schumacher, Peter Cook, Hitoshi Abe, etc.



Fig. 1: Building site of the Campus of the Vienna University of Economics and Business, October 2012.

There is an interesting historical fact about this building ground. In 1873 the large World Exposition (the Vienna World Fair) took place in this area. Today these world exhibitions are known as Expos, e.g. Expo Milan 2015, Shanghai 2010, Hannover 2000, etc. The Viennese exposition was situated over an area the size of 233 hectares, and it included 200 buildings. At that time, it was the first world exhibition in a German-speaking country after London (1851) and Paris (1855 and 1867), and at that time the biggest Expo in the world.

After the end of the Exposition in Vienna, which was an economic disaster, a lot of the exhibition objects from all over the world remained in Vienna, so that in 1874 the Oriental Museum was founded to ensure their safe-keeping. In 1866 this Museum was renamed as the Trade Museum. In 1896 the management of the museum presented a memorandum proposing the foundation of an Export Academy of the Imperial Austrian Trade Museum to the trade minister. Therefore, the Export Academy (K.u.K. Exportakademie) was founded in 1898 to provide professional training for future businessmen in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. In 1919 the Academy was renamed as the “Hochschule für Welthandel” and in 1975 to “Wirtschaftsuniversität Wien” (Vienna University of Economics and Business), like today [1]. Nowadays the University has about 24,000 students and 1,500 staff members, and currently it is the largest educational institution for business and economics in the European Union.

The idea to build a new university campus was born in 2002. The new Austrian University Act of 2002 enabled universities to become more independent. The decision to erect a new university campus in the area of the former World Exposition was made in 2007. In previous years, this area was used for the Trade Fair of Vienna which was renovated in 2003, so that there was a free space for the new University campus with 90,000 m². This locality is situated near the Prater, a large public park with an amusement area and the famous Wiener Riesenrad.

The planning process of the Campus was organized as a two-stage architectural competition. The organizer of the competition Campus WU GmbH was the site and building owner at the same time. This was a newly founded company consisting of 51% BIG – Bundes Immobilien Gesellschaft (the Federal Building Management, a governmental institution in Austria, which manages Austrian publicly owned real estate) and 49% the Vienna University of Economics and Business [5]. The Austrian architect from Vorarlberg Dietmar Eberle was the consultant for the client, and from the beginning a supporter of the concept based on the model of campus architecture like in the New World.

The following people were in the competition jury: Wolf D. Prix (the chair), Brian Cody, Bettina Götz, and Ernst Hubeli. The first stage of the competition started in December 2007 as an EU-wide open architectural competition for the general planning of the university complex. In April 2008 only 24 submissions were on the table, 20 of them from offices in Austria, three from Germany and one from Portugal. The jury and the client made no secret that the competition had not produced the desired solution: "The approaches of the individual applicants were obviously too pragmatic and not visionary ..." [1]. The winning project was from the Viennese office BUSarchitektur by Laura Spinadel and Jean Pierre Bolivar. The jury decided that even that project had to be reworked. The winning team received a contract for the general planning and a contract for the design of the building plot for the Teaching Centre.

For the design of the other four building plots, a second stage of the competition had to be organized. On the list of the 133 participating architectural offices, now a lot of the world's best-known architects could be found. The jury chairman Wolf D. Prix said in an interview that he was an opponent of the anonymous competitions because of the waste of time. Therefore he provided "some contacts" of the architects who had to be asked to participate (W. Prix, citation in: Boeckl, pp. 26-27). Every office which applied had to submit some references of its past works and preferences for the desired working area. After the ranking of the best, six architects were assigned to each building plot. In October 2008 the jury received all draft projects of which three each per construction area were selected for the second round. At the last stage, the competition was no longer anonymous. The jury made the final decision in November 2008. The master plan of the BUS architects had to be filled in with the building design projects of the winners. The start of the building construction works was in October 2009 and the completion was in March 2013. After the testing phase the official opening of the Campus was six months later (Fig. 2).



Fig. 2: The new Campus of the Vienna University of Economics and Business, 2013. On the left: The Departments und Teaching Center by BUSarchitektur. In this building there are seminar rooms, self-study rooms, offices, the canteen, and the biggest lecture room on the campus for 650 people. On the right: The Departments and Student Center, designed by Hitoshi Abe.

The Library & Learning Center (LLC) designed by Zaha Hadid and Patrik Schumacher from the branch office of Zaha Hadid Architects in Hamburg has advanced as an “architectural highlight”. After the “pragmatic and not visionary” results of the first stage competition, Zaha Hadid won the second stage of the competition for this building plot. Her office made a design project of the building and forwarded it only as a 3D model to the engineering office Vasko & Partner from Vienna. After that, this engineering office had to make all the construction plans and details, including the “adaptation” and “fine tuning” of Zaha’s project, e.g. they had to change the angle of the façade [1]. Nevertheless, the building was completed just in time, and it became a trademark of the campus and of the whole University. From the start of the planning process this building and the public zone in front of it should be the central part of the University complex. However, this main plaza really looks very liveable during the terms, but it looks abandoned during term holidays and at the weekend. There are not enough attractions for people outside lecture time (Fig. 3).



Fig. 3: The Library & Learning Center (LLC), designed by Zaha Hadid Architects, Hamburg. In the front: The main plaza of the Campus on a Saturday in September, 2014.

This project leads to the topic of “trademarking” architecture and to the question of its identity-forming role. Good examples are the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao by Frank O. Gehry (there is already a term in common use: The Bilbao Effect), the Kunsthaus Graz by Peter Cook and Colin Fournier, etc. But haven’t we gone too far nowadays and haven’t we already downgraded architecture to the level of fashion products and brands? Is this situation generally the result of today’s mentality to be faster, to create a wow-effect and due to lack of time to remain superficial, to swim on the surface? If this is the fact, not only the architects are on the wrong track, because they deliver what people want, but also it seems that we are still leading towards a performative, fun making architecture today, and the reputation of an architect is becoming more and more similar to the one of celebrities – the star architect (or “starchitect”²) as a product of today’s post-ideological society.

2. THE CAMPUS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF VIENNA (ALTES AKH)

In comparison to this glamorous project, the Campus of the University of Vienna is implemented in the historical area of the former City Hospital. This low budget project of the late 1990s was built without involvement of the international star architects, but it works very well today as an educational institution, as well as a part of the existing urban structure.

The University of Vienna is the oldest one in the German-speaking area. It was established in 1365, and this year they celebrate their 650th anniversary. It is also the second oldest university in central Europe after the Charles University in Prague. The University of Vienna is also

² The word “starchitect” is a neologism. See: Wikipedia, accessed on 02.02.2015, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Starchitect>.

the largest university in Austria with 92,000 students and 9,500 employees, and according to the QS World University Ranking in 2014 it is the best rated university in the country.

The main building of this university was built by Heinrich Ferstel between 1877 and 1884 on Vienna's Ringstrasse. Today only the university administration and the main library can be found in this building. Because of the lack of space, most faculties and departments were located in many different buildings around the city before the opening of the new campus.

The idea of a new university campus was born in the 1950s, but it hadn't been realised before the late 1990s. The 10 hectares area of the old City Hospital in Vienna (in German: AKH – Allgemeines Krankenhaus) was chosen as the building site. Since 1657 a hospital for plague victims, named "Kontumaz-Hof", was situated in this area because of the location outside the former city walls. In previous times, under the reign of Maximilian II, there was a common cemetery for Protestants and Catholics named "Kaiserlicher Gottesacker" [2].

In 1686, at the time of the Turkish wars, the Imperial Council Johann Theobold Franckh, dedicated a building site for a new soldiers' hospital in this area. The Emperor Leopold I made his contribution to this project and implemented the taxes for the new hospital. In 1693 they started with the building construction works. Already at the beginning of the 18th century this hospital was able to supply up to 1,000 patients [2]. Actually that was the first construction stage of the future City Hospital. The architects of these first buildings were unknown. The whole idea to build a soldiers' hospital in Vienna was strongly influenced by the L'Hôtel des Invalides in Paris, built between 1670 and 1676 under the reign of Louis XIV, Le Roi-Soleil – the Sun King.

Between 1726 and 1730, under the reign of Emperor Karl VI, there was a bigger building extension in the hospital area in Vienna. This was enabled through the foundation by Ferdinand Ignaz von Thavonat. The architect of this project was Franz Anton Pilgram who had to build in so-called "Emperor Style", a representative architectural style. After the completion it was the largest building complex in Vienna. Nearly at the same time hospitals for old and disabled soldiers were built in Prague (1737) and Budapest (1728). In 1752, under the reign of Maria Theresa, some new buildings and courtyards were added to the complex of the hospital area. The architect was also Franz Anton Pilgram. At that time the hospital was able to supply up to 6,000 patients [2].

Between 1781 and 1784, under the reign of Emperor Joseph II, a huge renovation and building expansion took place. It was the most important building construction stage of the City Hospital. Basically, this building stock still survives today. Joseph II managed a redevelopment of the soldiers' hospital to a Universal Hospital ("Universal-Krankenhaus"). Actually it was the beginning of the public City Hospital of Vienna. In 1784 there was a grand opening ceremony of the new hospital. Joseph II staged his project as if everything was new, although he had built some new buildings, and a lot of existing buildings had only some new plaster. The main architect of this reconstruction was Josef Gerl who was charged with the overall planning. His associate, Isidore Canevale, designed the Garnisonsspital – the part used as a military hospital (completed in 1787) – and the Josephinum, a representative building constructed as a training centre for military doctors (Fig. 4).



Fig. 4: The Josephinum building (1783-1785), designed by Isidore Canevale.

After many smaller building reconstructions and extensions over the next 200 years, the planning for a new building for the City Hospital of Vienna started in 1950. Nearly at the same time the problem of the lack of space at the University of Vienna came into being. In 1952 Karl Brunner, the head of the City Planning Department of Vienna, developed the Regulation Plan of the hospital district (“Regulierung des Krankenhausviertels”). According to this plan almost all historical buildings of the former City Hospital had to be demolished. Fortunately, this plan was never realized. Roland Rainer, the next city planner after Brunner, finished the plan called Planning Concept Vienna in 1962 (“Planungskonzept Wien”), and he tried to keep most of the existing buildings. This concept was adopted in 1969 by Ernst Heiss, an employee of the Vienna City Planning Department. At that time a university campus in the area of the old hospital was fixed [3].

After 1970 there were many master plans for this area: the first competition in 1973, the master plan by Günther Feuerstein in 1974, the City Development Plan in 1985, and the competition in 1987-88. In 1988 the Municipality of the City of Vienna donated the property of the old City Hospital to the University of Vienna. After that, a continuous process of planning started in 1990 with the following designated architects: Hugo Potyka, Friedrich Kurrent, Johannes Zeininger, Sepp Frank, and Ernst M. Kopper – the group called ARGE Architekten Altes AKH. The start of the construction works was in 1995 and the building completion in 1997/1998.



Fig. 5: The Campus of the University of Vienna in 2014. On the left: the building extension in the inner courtyard. In the background: the building of the National Bank of Austria on the neighbouring plot of the Campus.

The planning of the new campus covered an area with the size of 100,000 m² with the existing buildings and nine inner courtyards. The facilities of the University of Vienna, mainly the Departments of Humanities with about 12,000 students, had to be housed. One of the predetermined project conditions was to create a public recreation area for the people from this city district (Alsergrund) which has a very high building density and a lack of green spaces. The other requirement was to plan also some non-academic facilities such as shops, restaurants, offices, cultural facilities, and a kindergarten. The planners tried to attract more pedestrians from outside of the campus area with some new entrances to the courtyards, with short paths, quiet places, green areas, and the shop entrances which face the inner courtyards and not the street. Due to the continuity of the usage, there are no closing times of the courtyards during the night.

The people from the Campus have a good access to public transport. Next to the main entrance, there is a tram stop, and the subway station is currently about 400 meters away. A new subway station of the planned subway line No. 5 should be directly on the campus. There is no parking facility in the campus area, only parking zones in the surrounding streets. Private cars are not allowed in the courtyards, only emergency vehicles, taxis, cars for disabled people, and delivery services for shops and restaurants.

The existing buildings of the former City Hospital had a ceiling construction with a span length of eight meters between the inner walls. This distance was too short for future uses, so the architects developed a five-meter wide structural addition of some old buildings in the courtyards No. 2, 8, and 9 (Fig. 5). The building width of 13 meters after the reconstruction was enough for two rows of offices and a corridor in between, or for a big lounge in front of the lecture rooms which can be used by students as a break room or as a catering room for public events.

The last building reconstruction in the area of the former City Hospital was the renovation of the former Garnisonspital (Fig. 6). This building plot was not a part of the donation of the Municipality of Vienna, because it was owned by the Federal Government as part of the military properties. In 2013 this building was renovated by the architects Nehrer/Medek/Pohl and there is now the University Clinic of Dentistry, a part of the Medical University of Vienna. Until 2004 the Medical Faculty was a part of the University of Vienna, till it became an individual University. It was a very successful reconstruction project regarding the coexistence of old and new building parts.



Fig. 6: The University Clinic of Dentistry by the architects Nehrer/Medek/Pohl, 2013.

Generally, on this University Campus the connection of old and new works very well. Also the combination of the public functions and the university facilities is one of the best practice examples. Public use is particularly present in the courtyard No. 1 with children's playgrounds, food market, cafés, restaurants, shops, green area, etc. At the beginning the managers were concerned about the economic consequences of the concept of the shop and restaurant entrances which strictly face the courtyard. But today, after more than 15 years of experience, they can say that it works well.



Fig. 7: The Campus of the University of Vienna, 2014.

According to the campus architect and facility manager, Mr Jalil Hojatollah Saber Zaimian, there is an extraordinary background story about the development of this project. In 1988 the Municipality of Vienna sold the property of the former City Hospital directly to the University of Vienna for the symbolic amount of one Austrian Schilling. The University had to take a credit and to invest money in this building project. After the completion of the building works, the University was allowed to earn money from the rent for the restaurants, shops, and offices on the campus. In the following years, with this income they have paid back the credit. For an Austrian university it was the first time to be self-financing, and the new experience has been better than expected. Year after year, the University of Vienna has made even a small budget surplus which is invested in some research programs [6].

Table 8: The fact check between the Campus of the University of Vienna and the Campus of the Vienna University of Business and Economics [2], [5].

	Campus University of Vienna	Campus Vienna University of Economics and Business
date of completion	1998	2013
number of students	12,000 students	24,000 students
net usable area	36,400 m ²	100,000 m ²
site area	100,000 m ² open space 70,000 m ²	90,000 m ² open space 55,000 m ²
budget	673 million ATS today = 64 million EUR (inflation-adjusted)	492 million EUR
costs per m ² usable area	1,758 EUR/m ²	4,920 EUR/m ²
costs per student	5,333 EUR/student	20,500 EUR/student

According to the Table 8, we can make a simple comparison of the facts which speak for themselves. The question which remains is that even if the Campus of the University of Vienna was a reconstruction project, and even if the future jobs of the business and economics students bring probably more money than the jobs of the students of humanities, is it normal to spend 3-4 times more money per student and square meter to build a campus of a public university with the money from the tax payers?

3. CONCLUSION

The Campus of the University of Vienna was built as a low-budget project without international star architects, but it was built according to the needs of the students and the needs of the local population. It is also very well integrated into the existing urban structure. The history of the central European universities has always been closely linked to the history of the cities. The Campus of the University of Economics and Business was a greenfield project with a large budget, and in the future it will have to show that this concept of a campus, which is still more familiar with the Anglo-Saxon tradition, can also work in a European city, to be a part of it and not a foreign body, and in no case to be a playground for star architects.

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